

Immanuel Presbyterian Church
1100 North Astor Street
Milwaukee
Milwaukee County
Wisconsin

HABS No. WIS-263

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

IMMANUEL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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Location: 1100 North Astor Street (east side of North Astor Street between East Juneau Avenue and East State Street), Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin.

Present Owner and Occupant: Immanuel Presbyterian Church

Statement of Significance: This striking edifice, dedicated in 1875, is the city's prime example of the Victorian Gothic style and is a Milwaukee Landmark.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1873-75. The architect's plans were approved in March, 1873; ground was broken in May, the cornerstone laid in August. On December 28 of the following year the church opened, and on January 3, 1875, it was dedicated. Cost of the building is said to have been in excess of \$160,000.
2. Architect: Edward Townsend Mix. Mix (1831-1890) was born and raised in New Haven, Connecticut and was apprenticed for six years to Richard Upjohn, a New York architect who was a leading proponent of Gothic Revival architecture. He came to Milwaukee in 1856 after a period of practice in Chicago in association with William W. Boyington, architect of Chicago's famous Water Tower. During the course of his practice in Milwaukee, Mix produced a wide variety of buildings, ranging from flamboyant Victorian designs to meticulously correct Gothic Revival forms. He was particularly noted for his fine ecclesiastical architecture. His other Milwaukee churches include All Saints Episcopal Church (WIS-265), and St. Paul's Episcopal Church (WIS-271). An example of his domestic architecture is the Jason Downer House (WIS-260).
3. Original and subsequent owner: Immanuel Presbyterian Church
4. Builders and suppliers: John J. Crilley, excavation (and possibly foundation); Hiram R. Bond, mason work; Cook & Hyde, cut stone; August Henry, stone carving; Buestrin &

Reickhoff, carpentry; Hornbach & Wagner, Biersach & Niedermeyer, and Bayley & Greenslade, iron work; Richard Jones, slate; P. M. Almini, frescoes; George Galloway & Co., painting; McCully & Miles, stained glass; Marshall Bros., organ; and Stark Bros., carpets and upholstering. Limestone for the walls came from the Story Bros.' quarries in Wauwatosa, red and gray sandstone for exterior trim from Potsdam, New York and from Ohio, granite columns for the main entrance from Scotland. The last were supplied by E. P. Bowman's firm, which also imported the English tile used to pave vestibule floors.

5. Original plans: Not located.
6. Alterations and additions: On the exterior Immanuel Church is much as it was in 1875, but on the interior most spaces have been altered, the nave and chancel significantly so, as comparison of the present facilities with photographs and descriptions of the original makes clear. Building permits and other sources record these changes:
 - a. 1887-89: On December 31, 1887, fire swept through the edifice, damaging rooms in the north wing and completely gutting nave and chancel in the south section, destroying the original red and gray slate roof and gabled dormers of the clerestory windows, consuming all furnishings and fittings, and leaving only the limestone walls intact. When the church was rebuilt, a costly project completed by March, 1889, no attempt was made to duplicate the original auditorium, and the new design was considerably less elaborate, lacking the nave arcade, vaulted aisles, and sumptuous ornament of its predecessor.
 - b. 1937-38: On the occasion of the centennial of First Presbyterian Church, the building was refurbished and remodelled. The basement floor was lowered, new partitions were set into place, and the stairway on the east side of the basement was altered. On the first floor, the main vestibule, the chapel, and the parlor in the north wing were altered, and the gallery at the north end of the nave was closed off. The second story was also modified at this time. Permit No. 3849, April 4, 1938, documents much of this work and names Fitzhugh Scott of Milwaukee as the architect and Selzer-Ornst as the contractor.
 - c. 1957-58: Permits Nos. 200767A, August 16, 1957, and 214856, February 26, 1958, relate to construction of the additions at the southeast corner and south end

of the church--the latter enlarging the chancel and adding a custodian's workshop and pastor's study--together with remodelling of the existing building. This work was done under the direction of Grellinger & Rose, a local architectural firm. At this time, new pews and pulpit were installed and the nineteenth-century wainscot and other wooden trim in the auditorium were bleached to match the new furnishings. The walls and ceiling were also painted.

B. Historical Events and Persons Connected with the Structure:

Immanuel Church was founded in 1870 by members of the First Presbyterian Church, organized in 1837, and North Presbyterian Church, established in 1849. Before completion of the new edifice on Astor Street, each congregation held services in their own building. First Church, on the northwest corner of Milwaukee and Mason Streets, was a classical structure of wood erected in 1841-43. North Church, located at the northwest corner of Milwaukee and State Streets, was a brick structure of Gothic Revival design and was dedicated in 1855. The former changed hands in 1874 and again seven years later. Then, in 1883, First Church was dismantled, and the present Colby and Abbot Building rose in its place. In 1871 North Church was sold to the Welsh Calvinistic Society and sixteen years ago became the property of the Milwaukee School of Engineering. It serves today as the school's book store.

In 1969 Immanuel Presbyterian Church was named a Milwaukee Landmark.

C. Sources of Information:

1. Old views: The Milwaukee County Historical Society has an excellent collection of early views of the exterior. Two photographs of the interior taken before the 1887 fire were reproduced on the back cover of The Fiftieth Anniversary, Immanuel Presbyterian Church, published in 1920.

2. Bibliography:

- a. Primary and unpublished sources:

Building permits and other records, 1938-66,
General Office, Building Inspection, 1010
Municipal Building, Milwaukee.

Inspection of the structure September 20, 1970,
and January 1, 2, and 3, 1971.

b. Secondary and published sources:

Pagel, Mary Ellen, "Immanuel Presbyterian Church,"
Historical Messenger of the Milwaukee County His-
torical Society, XXI, September, 1965, 82-95 and
sources cited.

Perrin, Richard W. E., The Architecture of Wisconsin,
Madison, 1967, 80-81.

Perrin, Richard W. E., Milwaukee Landmarks, Milwaukee,
1968, 16.

Withey, Henry F. and Withey, Elsie R. Biographical
Dictionary of American Architects (Deceased), Los
Angeles, 1956, 423-24.

Prepared by Mary Ellen Wietczykowski
1111 North Astor Street
Milwaukee, Wisconsin
January 3, 1971

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: Immanuel Presbyterian Church is asymmetrical in plan and elevations, picturesque in silhouette, and richly varied in color, texture, materials, and ornament. The exterior is a splendid specimen of that bold, eclectic, Gothic style popular in England and this country during the third quarter of the nineteenth century. The original interiors, particularly the nave and chancel, were colorful and exuberant, but were destroyed by fire in 1887. The present auditorium and chancel, dating from 1888-89 and remodelled and redecorated in recent years, are simpler and considerably more sedate in form, color scheme, and spirit than the Mix designs of 1873-75.
2. Condition of fabric: Very good

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: Three stories plus basement and two towers. The church measures some 180 feet north-south (including the chancel addition) by 80 feet east-west (north wing). The north tower is reported to be 100 feet in height, the south tower 150 feet, and the roof, at the ridge, 90 feet.

2. Foundations: Limestone and brick
3. Wall construction: Random ashlar, rock-faced cream-gray local limestone trimmed about openings and in belt courses with red-orange and medium-gray sandstone. Polished granite columns, imported from Scotland, flank the main entrance portals on the west front. The shed dormers of the clerestory windows, the north wall within the gable end, and the oriel in the east elevation all have imbricated, red shingle siding.
4. Chimneys: Two; limestone; both near the north end of the fabric.
5. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: The main entrance to the church is on the west elevation between the north and south towers. Three Gothic arched portals, each fitted with ornate wrought-iron gates, lead into the tile-paved recessed porch. At the north and south ends of the porch there are rectangular, panelled, wooden double-doors, which lead into the north and south towers. One step above the porch on the east side is an alcove with two large, rectangular, panelled, wooden doors with plain glass lights above the lock-rails. These doors are flanked by sidelights, have stained-glass transoms, and lead from the alcove into the main vestibule. Also in the west elevation, at the junction of the nave and chancel, is an arched, panelled, wooden door with an arched ornamental tympanum.

The east elevation contains two doors: A rectangular, panelled, wooden door, glazed above the lockrail, leads into the main vestibule, giving access to the stairway at the east end of this space. A plain, rectangular wooden door opens into the chancel addition. On the south elevation, a rectangular, wooden door with a rectangular light, leads into the single-story addition located at the southeast corner of the building. A similar door with a wire-glass light opens into the basement of the chancel addition.
 - b. Windows: Lancet windows, used singly, in pairs, and in sets of three, are predominant. The architect also incorporated flat-, segmental-, and round-arched openings, as well as circular windows into his design. Some of the window openings are cusped; some are ornamented with tracery; a number of them are fitted with plain glass panes; some are louvered; some are equipped

with diamond-paned leaded glass, and others with stained glass.

6. Roof:

- a. Shape and covering: A steeply pitched gable roof covers the nave and extends over the north wing. There are intersecting gable roofs at the transept, above the central bay of the north elevation, and at the second bay from the north in the east elevation. A gable roof also covers the chancel and a shed roof covers the addition at the southeast corner of the building. The majority of the roof covering is slate. There is a simple, decorative iron cresting at the roof ridge.
- b. Framing: Timber
- c. Cornice and eaves: Sandstone, limestone and wood
- d. Dormers: Shed dormers form clerestory windows on the east and west sides of the nave roof. There are two hipped dormers in the north elevation. In the east elevation, a single dormer is located above the oriel window of the east staircase.

7. Stairways: On the west elevation there are four steps, stretching between the two towers. These lead from street grade to the recessed entrance portico. Also on the west elevation are three limestone steps leading to an entry at the intersection of the nave and chancel. At the east entrance to the main vestibule are two above-grade steps. Entrances to the additions on the south and southeast are three steps above grade. A concrete stairway on south side joins grade level to the basement.

C. Description of Interior:

- 1. Floor plans: Immanuel Church is L-shaped. The north wing is perpendicular to North Astor Street on an east-west axis; the south wing is parallel to the street and is on a north-south axis. At the northwest and southwest corners of the north wing are towers which flank the recessed entry porch. These towers are accessible through doors on the north and south walls of the entry porch.
- a. First floor: The first floor of the south tower contains a cloak room. The main vestibule in the north wing is entered through a double-door in the east wall of the entrance porch. This vestibule extends the full depth of the north wing. At the far end of the vestibule is a stairway which joins the basement, first and second floors. Opening off of the north side of the vestibule, and opposite of the narthex, are the church parlor and a small chapel.

On the south side of the vestibule are three sets of double doors leading into the south wing. Northernmost in this wing is the narthex, a single-story space separated from the nave by a five-bay arcade. The nave and chancel comprise the remainder of the south wing. Additions at the southeast corner and south end of this wing include a service hall with a stairway connecting the first floor with the basement; there are also several small passages and vestibules which connect the custodian's workshop and the pastor's study with the main body of the church.

- b. Second floor: The second floor of the north wing (east to west) contains the stairhall and kitchen, a large assembly room with a stage at the west end, and the bride's room and antechamber--both in the south tower. A narrow room connects these rooms and the north tower stairway. At the north end of the south wing, in an area originally occupied by a gallery and overlooking the nave, are three rooms separated by sliding doors from the assembly hall in the north wing.
- c. Third floor: There is an attic in the north wing.
- d. Basement: There are meeting rooms in the basement of the north wing. On the east side of the south wing are mechanical equipment rooms. On the west side, a passage joins the north wing with the basement rooms in the additions.

2. Stairways:

- a. North tower: Wooden staircases join the basement, first, second, and third stories; the section between first and second floors has ornamental, wooden balusters and newels.
- b. North wing, east end: There are two wooden staircases: one connects the basement and first floor; the second is a symmetrical divided-flight stairway which connects the first and second stories and has decorative wooden balusters and newels.
- c. Southeast addition: A concrete staircase joins the basement and first floor.

- 3. Flooring: Concrete floors in basement; red-brown and gold ceramic tile in main vestibule; carpeting and vinyl tile in nave; carpeting in narthex, chancel, parlor, and pastor's study; carpeting and wooden flooring in chapel; elsewhere, soft tile.

4. Wall and ceiling finish: Chiefly, plaster walls and ceilings. Panelled wainscot with textured plaster walls above and beamed, panelled and coffered ceilings in the main vestibule and auditorium; panelled wainscot, built-in bookcases in west wall, beamed ceiling with acoustical tile in parlor; beamed ceiling in chapel; acoustical tile ceiling in assembly hall; unfinished walls and ceilings in basement-level machine rooms and passage, south wing.
5. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: Generally, the nineteenth-century doors remaining on the first and second stories are panelled rectangular units, some of them are glazed above the lock rail; most first-story doors are framed with molded trim and ornamental corner blocks. There are sliding doors--panelled wooden units--between rooms at the north end, south wing, second floor, and the assembly hall in the north wing. Typically, basement doors of the north wing are rectangular, two-panel, wooden units set in plain wooden frames. Doors in the additions of 1957-58 are predominantly simple rectangular wooden units in metal frames.
 - b. Windows: Of the many attractive stained glass windows at Immanuel Church, perhaps the most noteworthy are the Presbyterian Window and the three angel windows. The Presbyterian window, a colorful three-panel composition symbolizing the denomination's history, is located on the landing between the first and second floors in the east staircase of the north wing. The three angel windows in the nave are memorials to Mary F. Robinson, Timothy W. and Gertrude H. Goodrich, and Clarissa B. Young and are all signed by the Tiffany Studios.
6. Trim: Wood
7. Hardware: Iron and brass
8. Lighting: Electric
9. Heating: City heat

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: Immanuel Church stands on the east side of North Astor Street; the main entrance faces the street. To the north is a parking lot, to the south a driveway; and on the east, from north to south, are a residence, Waverly House--the church-owned Office and Youth Building--and a parking lot.

2. Outbuilding: Waverly House, 1035 North Waverly Place, a three-story brick and stone office building erected for the church in 1957-58 after plans by Grellinger & Rose, Milwaukee Architects.
3. Walks: A broad walk joins the Astor Street sidewalk and the main entrance stairway on the west; there is also a walk along the east side of the building between north and south parking areas.
4. Landscaping: On the west side of the church is a well-tended lawn with shrubs and trees.

Prepared by John Thiel
3044 West Villard Avenue
Milwaukee, Wisconsin
September 10, 1970
and
Mary Ellen Wietczykowski
1111 North Astor Street
Milwaukee, Wisconsin
January 3, 1971

PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

These records were made during the 1970 Milwaukee Project under the sponsorship of the Milwaukee Landmarks Commission of the City of Milwaukee--Richard W. E. Perrin, Chairman--and were donated to the Historic American Buildings Survey. This project was the continuation of a program to record the historic architecture of Milwaukee begun in 1969, under the joint sponsorship of the Milwaukee Landmarks Commission and the Historic American Buildings Survey, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation, National Park Service, Department of the Interior. The project team included architect John Thiel of Milwaukee; architectural historian Mary Ellen Wietczykowski--now Mary Ellen Young--(Milwaukee Landmarks Commission); and photographer Douglas Green. The data was prepared for transmittal to the Library of Congress by HABS editors Carolyn Heath, Mary Farrell, Candace Reed, and Philip Hamp.